

## CLAIMS

1. A system for teaching phonics, comprising a visual representation of a plurality of words using ordinary spelling, and adjacently positioned symbols that consist primarily or entirely of the letters of a standard alphabet are used assist in sounding out the words.
2. The system of claim 1 wherein the clarifying symbols are omitted for at least some of the letters.
3. The system of claim 1 wherein at least 90% of the clarifying symbols consists of standard letters.
4. The system of claim 1 wherein all of the clarifying symbols consist of standard letters.
5. The system of claim 1 wherein the standard letters and the clarifying symbols together comprise an initial teaching alphabet consisting of less than 44 phonograms.
6. The system of claim 1 wherein the standard letters and the clarifying symbols together comprise an initial teaching alphabet consisting of 36 phonograms.
7. The system of claim 1 further comprising a prompt to show when a plurality of the letters form a blended sound.
8. The system of claim 7 wherein the prompt comprises underlining of the plurality of the letters.
9. The system of claim 1 further comprising a coloration of a selected one of the standard letters to show that such letter is silent in the word.
10. The system of claim 1 further comprising a modification of a selected one of the standard letters to show that such letter is either silent or sounds according to the adjacent phonetic symbol.
11. The system of claim 10 wherein the modification comprises representing the selected letter using a particular coloration.

12. The system of claim 1 wherein differences in case of the letters are not used to represent differences in sound.
13. The system of claim 1 wherein the adjacently positioned clarifying symbols are placed below corresponding ones of the standard letters of at least some of the words.
14. The system of claim 1 further comprising a reading assist card having a window sized and dimensioned to focus attention on a subset of the words and corresponding ones of the adjacently positioned clarifying symbols.
15. An initial teaching alphabet consisting substantially of the letters a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z, and combinations of the letters, in which words are regularly written using their ordinary spellings.
16. A method of teaching phonetic reading comprising using the initial teaching alphabet of claim 15 in which single ones of the letters represent corresponding short vowel sounds.
17. A method of teaching phonetic reading comprising using the initial teaching alphabet of claim 15 in which combinations of the letters represent long vowel sounds.
18. A method of teaching phonetic reading comprising displaying a line of words with ordinary spelling, and using symbols of the initial teaching alphabet of claim 15 to accompany some of the letters of the words.
19. A method of teaching phonetic reading comprising displaying display a sentence of at least five words with ordinary spelling, and placing symbols of initial teaching alphabet below selected ones of the words as aids in pronunciation of the selected words.
20. The method of claim 19 further comprising displaying at least one of the words without a corresponding one of the pronunciation aids.